

Future Warriors: The U.S. Army in 2025

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**FUTURE WARRIORS:
THE U.S. ARMY IN 2025**

by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Future Warriors: The U.S. Army in 2025

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Thesis: The organizational structure of the United States Army must change if it is to remain a viable combat force in the year 2025 that is capable of getting the right force to the fight at the right time.

Discussion: The U.S. Army is preparing for the future by developing technology that will improve upon the Army's performance in Desert Storm. The focus on digitization and its' integration into the mechanized/armored force will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of this force in a future land war. How many future Desert Storm type wars will the United States fight? How many countries, within the next twenty-five years, can form an army to rival the U.S. Army without our knowing about this development? In the meantime, how does the Army propose to meet an enemy threat that initially focuses on small operations but quickly adapts and changes the conflict into a more conventional type of conflict? The initial forming of a task force is designed to meet the immediate threat but current Army structure does not have the flexibility to change, in mid-crisis, to meet a new emerging threat once the task force is deployed.

The future of the U.S. Army rests with a re-organization that has divisions capable of fighting in all environments and scenarios. A three brigade division that has one tank battalion,

one mechanized infantry battalion, and one airborne/air assault capable light infantry battalion within each brigade. This combat force, while still heavy, would not require as much transport as a true heavy division. Additionally, the battalion organization would not consist of pure armor, mechanized or light infantry forces. A battalion might consist of three companies each consisting of one armor platoon, one mechanized platoon, and one light infantry platoon. The flexibility afforded by this organization makes this a more realistic fighting force for the future than the force structure that is now planned.

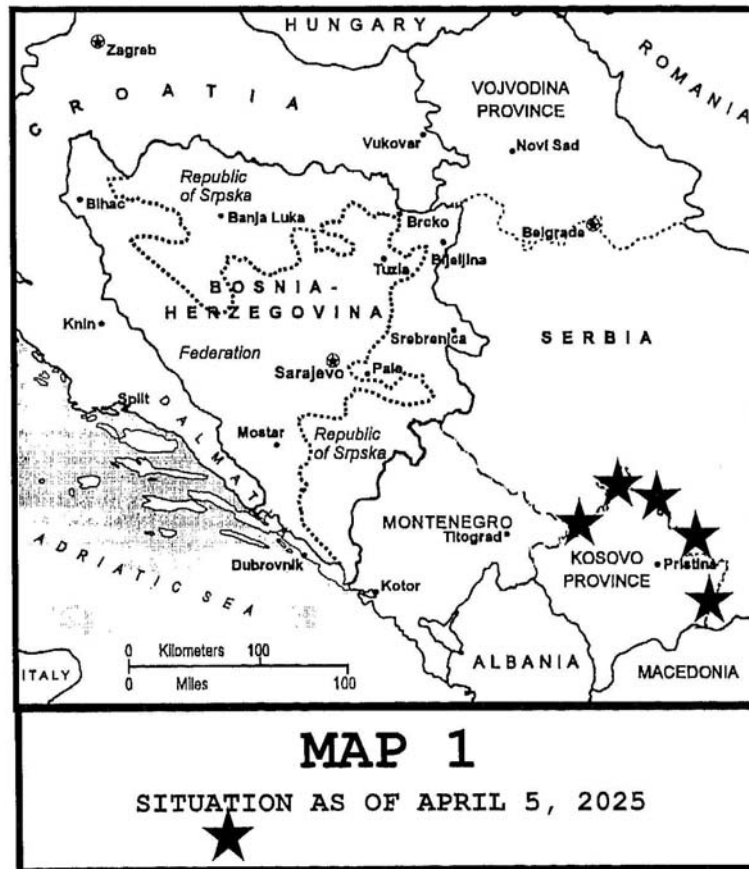
Conclusion: The United States Army's future focus is on making the combined arms mechanized/armored force a more lethal fighting force. While this is an honorable goal it should not be the ultimate goal when the majority of our future threats are not from a nation with a standing army but rather from small guerilla/light forces that will fight us in urban areas. The desired endstate for the United States Army is apparent. The organizational structure of the United States Army must change if it is to remain a viable combat force in the year 2025 that is capable of getting the right force to the fight at the right time.

The wars of the future will require flexible and adaptive forces composed of a mixture of light infantry, tanks, and mechanized forces that can fight together as a team, and survive, in any environment. The capability and flexibility of the future

force is reliant on organizational and cultural changes that must happen in the United States Army today. Without these changes future enemies will not have the opportunity to experience the full lethality of the true combined arms team.

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THE PROBLEM

We must never fall into the trap of thinking that simply by fielding new and better systems we will maintain our lead. History has repeatedly demonstrated that technology alone is not the answer. The quality of our people, caliber of our leaders and operational concepts and doctrine we use to employ technology on the battlefield are the decisive factors.

General Henry H. Shelton¹

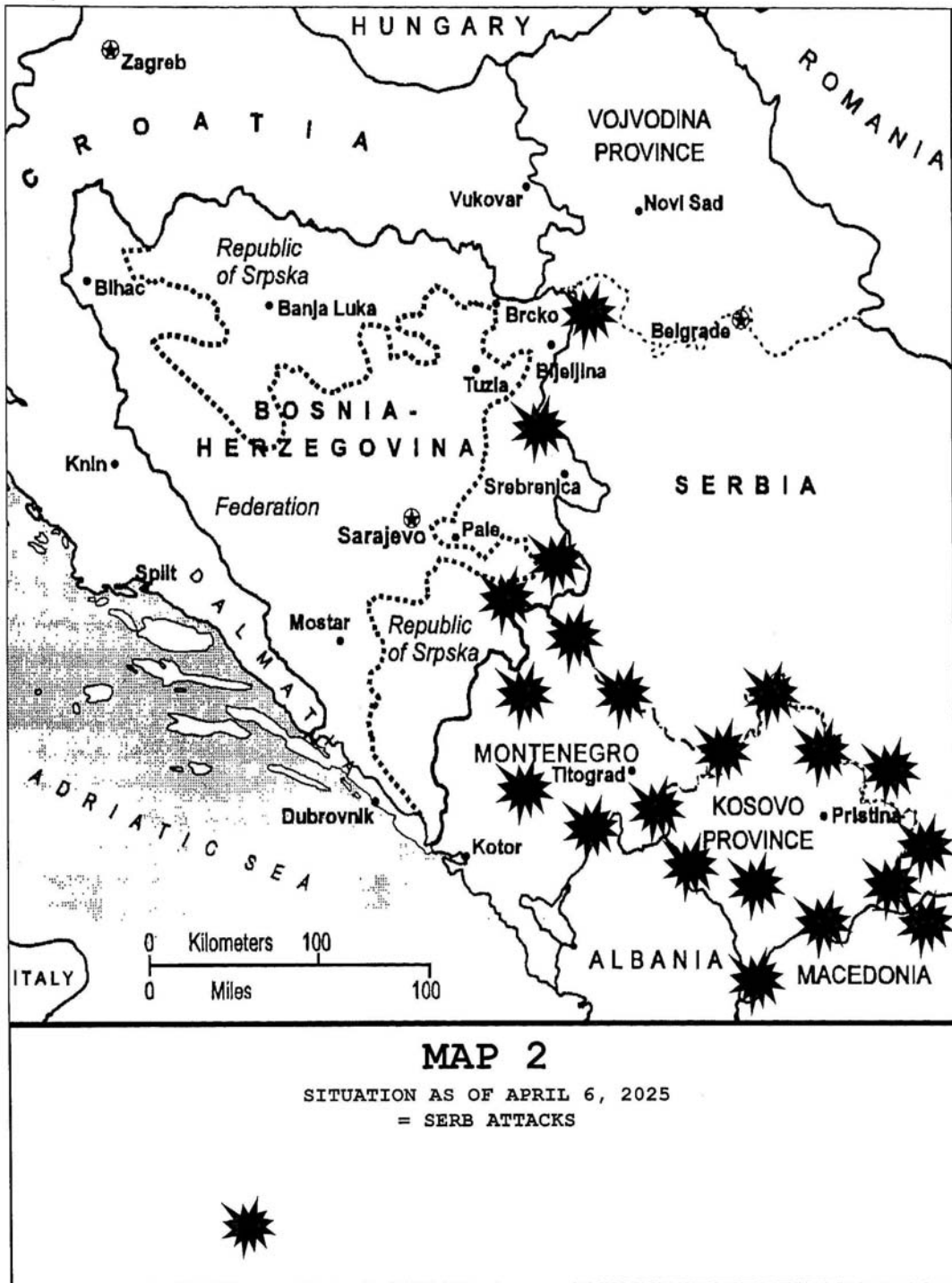
The United States Army is going to experience profound change within the next twenty-five years. There is little or no disagreement on this point by military professionals. The disagreements start when how the Army will change becomes the issue. The major problem facing the Army is which direction should it take as it heads down this path of change. What is the desired endstate for the U.S. Army in the year 2025? How does the Army reach this endstate? What question must the Army answer to ensure that the direction of change chosen is the correct path?

The United States Army's future focus is on making the combined arms mechanized/armored force a more lethal fighting force. While this is an honorable goal it should not be the ultimate goal when the majority of our future threats are not from a nation with a standing army but rather from small guerilla/light forces that will fight us in urban areas. The desired endstate for the United States Army is apparent. The organizational structure of the United States Army must change if

it is to remain a viable combat force in the year 2025 that is capable of getting the right force to the fight at the right time.

Reuters News Service, April 6, 2025 (7:35 a.m.): *The tenuous peace of the Balkans was shattered at 6:00 a.m., local time, on this Easter morning as Serbian military forces and various Serbian militias conducted a series of rapid and deadly raids on NATO peacekeepers throughout the Balkan area. At the NATO Headquarters in Brussels it was confirmed that Serbian military forces have attacked NATO peacekeepers in the Balkan states. There is no confirmation on the number of NATO military casualties but fighting is continuing in Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Albania.*

The future warriors in 2025 will have both high expectations and numerous limitations placed upon them. Ralph Peters wrote that, "We prepare for our ideal missions, while the real missions must be improvised at great expense to readiness, unit integrity, and the quality of life of our service members."² This quote focuses on the crux of the problem facing the U.S. Army today. The question begs to be asked. Will the United States Army be a viable combat force in the year 2025 that is capable of defeating an enemy in any environment? The answer is yes but only if changes are made and the focus of Army senior leaders changes.



The U.S. Army is preparing for the future by developing technology that will improve upon the Army's performance in Desert Storm. The focus on digitization and its' integration into the mechanized/armored force will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of this force in a future land war. How many future Desert Storm type wars will the United States fight? How many countries, within the next twenty-five years, can form an army to rival the U.S. Army without our knowing about this development? In the meantime, how does the Army propose to meet an enemy threat that initially focuses on small operations but quickly adapts and changes the conflict into a more conventional type of conflict? The initial forming of a task force is designed to meet the immediate threat but current Army structure does not have the flexibility to change, in mid-crisis, to meet a new emerging threat once the task force is deployed.

In his observations on problems that face units at the National Training Center, Colonel John D. Rosenberger wrote:

The brigade task forces the OPFOR opposes each month are not, by Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E), organized as combined-arms teams. Instead, they are a temporary or ad hoc collection of units from different divisions or installations, thrown together for training, who have not had the opportunity to train together or to train as one team at the frequency necessary to develop their full combat potential.³

NATO Headquarters press release, April 6, 2025 (12:30 p.m.):

We have confirmed that five NATO compounds along the Kosovo-Yugoslav border are under the control of Serb military forces.

Our initial estimates on friendly casualties due to this unprovoked attack range from 100-550 NATO peacekeepers in Kosovo alone. The governments of Montenegro, Albania and Macedonia are requesting assistance from NATO to halt the Serb advance into their countries. NATO airforces are prepared to conduct offensive operations at this time. NATO leadership has warned the government of Yugoslavia that further acts of aggression may result in NATO air attacks against targets within Yugoslavia. NATO will continue to seek a diplomatic solution to this crisis before committing combat forces to the area. We have asked NATO member countries to begin preparations for the deployment of ground forces to the Balkan area. Our peacekeepers on the ground faced overwhelming odds when confronted by armor and mechanized forces. We must reiterate that our peacekeepers where in Kosovo to preserve the peace and they where not equipped to fight against an organized and determined enemy.

In future wars the U.S. Army will be called on to rapidly deploy combat forces throughout the world. The United States Marines are prepared to execute no-notice deployments, as are members of the United States Army's 75th Ranger Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, 101st Air Assault Division, and the 10th Mountain Division. These units are all basically light fighters even though some of these units possess a limited amount of armored vehicles. The units that will provide the true staying

power, and the punch, are the mechanized/armored forces in the U.S. Army.

Mechanized and armored division personnel stationed in Germany and the United States are prepared for no notice worldwide deployments. The problem is that the equipment, vehicles, support apparatus, and weapons of mechanized/armored forces are not prepared for no-notice deployments. Everything is packed and ready to go but how does one get a fully functional armored division to Albania within thirty-six to seventy-two hours?

The pre-positioning of vehicles and equipment is an option that has been tried before but this option was based on having one known threat, the Soviet Union. Recent events show that war in the future is going to erupt in a rapid manner and that the United States Army is not going to have the luxury of a six month wait while equipment is packed and shipped to a future battlefield. We will not have the time to get off-loaded, organized, and trained to fight our enemy while he sits idly by. The future organization of the U.S. Army must take into account rapid deployment capabilities and the ability to arrive on the future battlefield ready to fight.

The pre-positioning of brigade sized equipment sets continues and is viewed as the solution to this problem. Stationary equipment sets located in areas such as the United Arab Emirates and Germany were chosen based on intelligence estimates identifying these locations as the closest to future hot spots in

the world. Ships that carry brigade sized sets are also an option as these ships, already loaded with equipment, could rapidly move to an area and await the arrival of the personnel to man the equipment. These are but partial solutions that fail to address the problem facing the United States Army in the future. How to get the right force to the fight at the right time.

The future organizational structure of the United States Army must focus on a force that is capable of fighting and winning in any environment. Prior to this force fighting it must train in order to become a lethal combat force on the future battlefield. The viability of this future force is dependent on equipment and organizational changes.

In a recent appearance before the Military Readiness Subcommittee the Commander of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment at the National Training Center, Colonel John D. Rosenberger, stated:

We have observed a steep decline in the ability of battalions and brigades to synchronize the employment of the combined arms team...Most operations these days can be characterized as a piecemeal employment of soldiers and units in the combined arms teams. Commanders and staffs, for the most part, are not adequately trained to set conditions for synchronization of the combined arms team, much less preserve it during battle. Furthermore, battalion and brigade commanders display a declining level of tactical competence, battlefield intuition, and mastery of the science and art of warfighting.⁴

The views of Colonel Rosenberger are based on his experience as the Senior Brigade Trainer at the National Training center from 1993-1994 and as the Commander of the Opposing Force at the

National Training Center since June 1998. In an article he wrote for Armor Magazine Colonel Rosenberger identified the major problem experienced by Army units as a lack of training by the combined arms team.⁵ Units are training individually as pure components but there is little training done as a member of the combined arms team. Reasons given include cost, time, other mission requirements, and personnel shortages. The views expressed by Colonel Rosenberger

CNN Report on the Balkan Crisis, April 6, 2025 (5:00 p.m.):

Serb military and militia forces have halted their advance into Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Macedonia. Intense fighting continues in Albania, with sporadic fighting still erupting in Kosovo. NATO peacekeeping forces have withdrawn from Kosovo into Albania. The United States State Department expressed outrage at the Serb attack and vowed that if fighting continues they will recommend that NATO conduct air attacks against Yugoslavia. "We are prepared to do whatever it takes to stop the Serb offensive against their neighbors," said a senior official. Pentagon sources state that they have alerted a division from Fort Hood, Texas and they are preparing for deployment to the Balkans. "The troops are ready to go right now but it will take us a while to get the equipment over there," said one military official.

CNN Report on the Balkan Crisis, April 9, 2025 (11:00 a.m.):

Yugoslavia announced that they have agreed to peace with the

governments of Albania, Macedonia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The three countries agreed to cede land to Yugoslavia in order to halt Serb aggression into their countries. In a further development the government of Montenegro has disbanded and Serbia announced that they have annexed Montenegro. The short war has ended but the diplomatic process will undoubtedly continue for some time to come. NATO announced that they are prepared to conduct an air campaign against Yugoslavia if they continue their aggression against their neighbors. A senior United States official stated that, "If this conflict would have gone on longer we were prepared to intercede on behalf of the affected countries with military force and, if necessary, we would have dispatched ground forces to the area."

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THE SOLUTION

Instead of exploring the possibility that new technologies might change the way we organize for war and conflict, we limit ourselves to the selection of technologies that allow us to improve traditional organizations. Our military is accumulative, not innovative.⁶

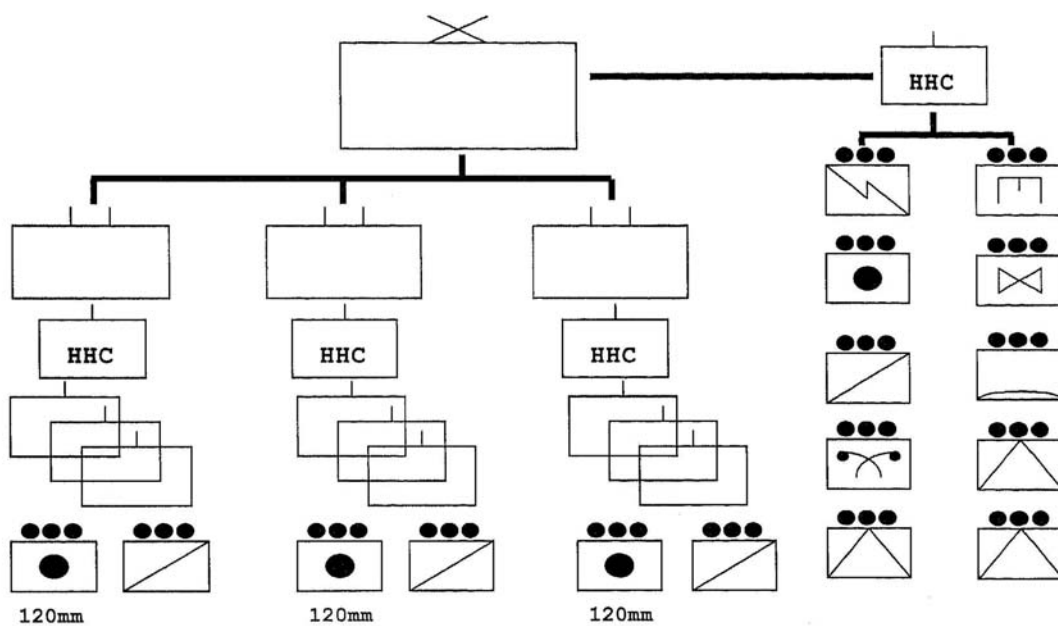
In order for the United States Army to remain a viable combat force in the year 2025 the organization of the army will have to change. Divisional restructuring must occur. An example is the 10th Mountain Division from Fort Drum, New York. This light division is prepared to deploy anywhere in the world within

twenty-four hours with the lead elements of the division. This division can land ready to fight yet they have no organic armor support. This division would survive but sustained offensive operations against an opponent with armor/mechanized capabilities would force this division into a defensive posture until friendly armor/mechanized forces arrived in theater.

A more realistic example is that of the 82nd Airborne Division during Desert Shield in 1990. The soldiers in that division that deployed to Saudi Arabia were in a defensive position awaiting the attack of Iraqi armored and mechanized forces. Meanwhile, United States armored and mechanized forces and equipment were being loaded on ships in order to move them into theater. The 82nd Airborne Division, even with their minimal armored support, were not capable of executing offensive operations against the enemy. Soldiers in this division called themselves the 82nd "Speed-bump" Division because they knew what would happen to them if the mechanized and armored forces of Iraq had attacked into Saudi Arabia.

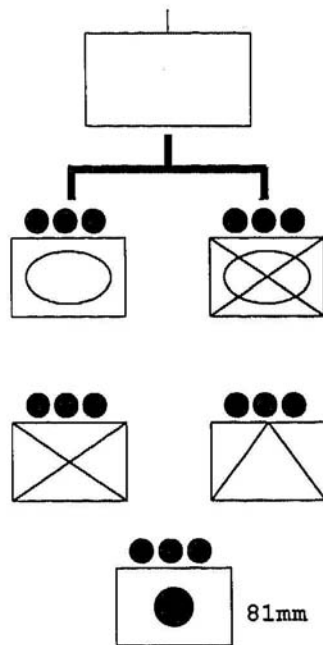
The future of the U.S. Army rests with a re-organization that has divisions capable of fighting in all environments and scenarios. A three brigade division that has one tank battalion, one mechanized infantry battalion, and one airborne/air assault capable light infantry battalion within each brigade. This combat force, while still heavy, would not require as much

PROPOSED BRIGADE ORGANIZATION



transport as a true heavy division. Additionally, the battalion organization would not consist of pure armor, mechanized or light infantry forces. A battalion might consist of three companies each consisting of one armor platoon, one mechanized platoon, and one light infantry platoon. The flexibility afforded by this organization makes this a more realistic fighting force for the future than the force structure that is now planned. "The US must prepare to face a wider range of threats, emerging unpredictably, employing varying combinations of technology, and challenging us at varying levels of intensity."⁷

PROPOSED COMPANY ORGANIZATION



Reuters News Service, April 30, 2025 (1:00 p.m.): The Balkan crisis is ended. Yugoslavia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania and

Macedonia signed a peace agreement today ending the recent Balkan crisis. Yugoslavia gained territory from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, and Macedonia in addition to promising to refrain from future offensive acts against these countries. The country of Montenegro and the autonomous state of Kosovo are now part of Serbia. NATO has not agreed to this peace agreement and NATO announced they are still prepared to conduct air attacks against Yugoslavia in order to stabilize the situation. A senior State Department official stated, "It is a good thing for them [Serbs] that they stopped fighting because we were prepared to send all of our planes in there to handle the situation." Both Congress and the Senate expressed outrage and disgust with the outcome of the Balkan crisis. One senator remarked, "What the heck was going on over there that allowed the Serbs to massacre some of our soldiers?" The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff stated that, "We were not prepared to fight a determined enemy who sought our destruction. We went over there [Kosovo] as peacekeepers and we did not have the equipment on the ground to fight a conventional type of war or a guerrilla type of war and we were faced with both of these scenarios." Both Congress and the Senate have promised inquiries into the actions of U.S. military leaders both prior to and during the recent Balkan crisis. "It's as if we were neither prepared, equipped, or trained to fight the Serb attackers," said one senator.

THE CONCLUSION

We seem to continually underestimate the ability of foes to devise low-tech ways to circumvent high-tech capabilities.⁸

The most dangerous enemy that the United States Army will face in the future is an enemy who is flexible, adaptive, and unpredictable. The future goal of the United States Army, if it is to remain a viable combat force, should focus on change and improving our warfighting capabilities in these times of limited fiscal and personnel resources. An adaptive, flexible, and lethal fighting force capable of executing the full mission spectrum in all environments is the number one priority for the U.S. Army as it begins its journey towards the year 2025.

The tendency is to let technological advances dictate what we will do and how we will fight in the future. Our focus should be on what we want technology to do for us. The rapidly changing technological revolution has placed the U.S. Army in a reactive mode. We need to take the offensive and make technology work for us and do what we want it to do for us in order to increase our warfighting capability. Otherwise, the U.S. Army in 2025 will field a fully digitized armor/mechanized force capable of defeating any armor force in the world but there will not be another armor/mechanized force to fight.

The United States Army's future focus is on making the combined arms mechanized/armored force a more lethal fighting force. While this is an honorable goal it should not be the



ultimate goal when the majority of our future threats are not from a nation with a standing army but rather from small guerilla/light forces that will fight us in urban areas. The desired endstate for the United States Army is apparent. The organizational structure of the United States Army must change if it is to remain a viable combat force in the year 2025 that is capable of getting the right force to the fight at the right time.

The wars of the future will require flexible and adaptive forces composed of a mixture of light infantry, tanks, and mechanized forces that can fight together as a team, and survive, in any environment. Colonel Guy C. Swan III wrote that the U.S. Army must, "Be cautious in making modernization and force structure decisions based on the outcomes of constructive simulation exercises."⁹ The capability and flexibility of the future force is reliant on organizational and cultural changes that must happen in the United States Army today. Without these changes future enemies will not have the opportunity to experience the full lethality of the true combined arms team.

ENDNOTES

¹General Henry H. Shelton, USA, "Operationalizing Joint Vision 2010," *Military Review*, May-June 1998: 81.

²Ralph Peters, "Heavy Peace," *Parameters*, VOL. XXIX, NO. 1, (Spring 1999): 76.

³John D. Rosenberger, COL, USA, "Reaching Our Army's Full Combat Potential in the 21st Century," *Armor Magazine*, May-June 1999, 9.

⁴John D. Rosenberger, COL, USA, Before the Military Readiness Subcommittee, Committee on National Security, First Session, 106th Congress, February 26, 1999, 2-3.

⁵Rosenberger, 8.

⁶Peters, 71.

⁷Commander, Joint Warfighting Center, "Expanding Joint Vision 2010," *Concept for Future Operations*, May 1997, 7.

⁸Steven Metz, "Which Army After Next? The Strategic Implications of Alternative Futures," *Parameters*, VOL. XXVII, NO. 3, (Autumn 1997): 32.

⁹Guy C. Swan, LTC, USA, "Letters," *Armor Magazine*, July-August 1998, 3-4.

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